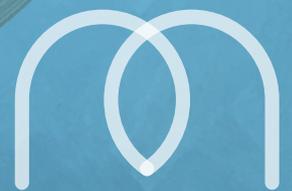


# A Whole Organisation Approach to Mental Health



# Mental Health First Aid starts with you

If you are reading this you are already thinking about how to improve the mental health of your organisation.

In this brochure you will find examples of how organisations across a range of industries are using Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training as part of their wellbeing strategy.

Each case study has shared their experience of the training and the impact it has had on their staff and business.



MHFA England

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# The business case for mental health

Work is good for health and health is good for business. Healthy people are happier, more engaged and more productive. We spend over half of our lives at work and it makes sense that the places we work in and the people who work in them are as healthy as they can be.

We all have mental health in the same way that we all have physical health. Mental health issues are common:

**60%** of UK employees have experienced a mental health issue due to work, or where work was a contributing factor



**31%** of UK employees have been 'formally diagnosed' with a mental health condition



(Business in the Community, 2017: **Mental Health at Work Report**)

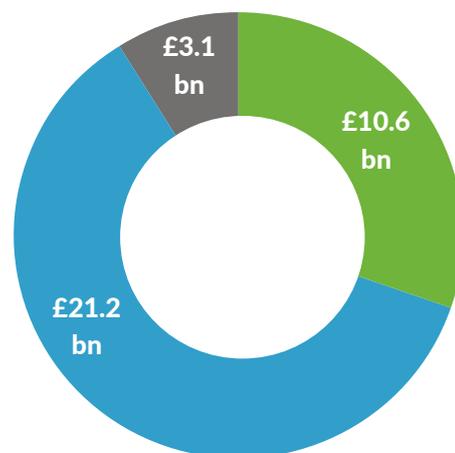
But many of us know little about mental health compared to our physical health. Stigma and lack of awareness can stop people from talking about their mental health, delaying them from getting the support needed for recovery.

This silence extends to the workplace. People often avoid disclosing a mental health issue to their employer for fear of being demoted, losing their job, or judged as less capable and missing out on opportunities. These concerns are justified if a Bupa poll is reflective of organisational attitudes to mental ill health: 94% of business leaders admitted to prejudice against people with mental health issues in their organisation.

## The costs of ignoring mental health

Stress, anxiety and depression are the biggest cause of sickness absence in our society, causing 15.8 million days of absence in the UK in 2016 (Office for National Statistics, 2017: **Sickness absence in the labour market: 2016**).

Mental ill health costs UK employers an estimated £35 billion each year - broken down, that's £10.6 billion in sickness absence, £21.2 billion in reduced productivity, and £3.1 billion in replacing staff who leave their jobs for mental health-related reasons.



- Reduced productivity
- Sickness absence
- Staff turnover

(Centre for Mental Health, 2017: **Mental health at work: The business costs ten years on**)

## Close the gap between aspiration and reality

Business in the Community's 2017 **Mental Health at Work Report** found that:

# 3 in 5

board members think their organisation does 'very well' in supporting employees with mental health issues, but...



# 27%

of all employees believe their organisation does not support those with mental health issues at all



# 11%

only 11% of employees felt able to tell their line manager about their mental health issue



Over half of UK employers would like to do more to improve staff wellbeing but don't feel they have the right training or guidance, according to research by Mind. Mental health can be a taboo subject, with employers and employees feeling scared or confused about confronting the issue.

Even though most line managers feel that employee wellbeing is their responsibility,

- Only 24% have received training in managing an employee with a mental health issue
- 3/4 believe there are barriers to supporting their staff
- 1/4 feel 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident' in recognising mental health issues
- 35% report having no workplace facilities or services that could help mental health and wellbeing

(Business in the Community, 2017: **Mental Health at Work Report**)

**Want help making the business case to senior leadership? Download our pre-prepared adaptable slide deck at [mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/for-workplaces](http://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/for-workplaces)**

## Business benefits of a healthy workplace

The good news is that simple steps to improve the management of mental health in the workplace, including prevention and early identification of problems, should enable employers to save "30% or more of the costs associated with mental ill health - at least £8 billion a year" (Centre for Mental Health).

Dr Justin Varney, National Lead for Adult Health and Wellbeing at Public Health England says: "Supporting mental health in the workplace is not just a corporate responsibility; staff who have positive mental health are more productive and businesses who promote a progressive approach to mental health can see a significant impact on business performance, so it's about good business too."

Recruitment, engagement and loyalty also benefit in a mentally healthy workplace. 60% of employees would feel more motivated and more likely to recommend their organisation as a good place to work if their employer took action to support mental health and wellbeing (Mind, 2013: **How to promote wellbeing and tackle the causes of work-related mental health problems**).

According to the World Federation for Mental Health, "employees favour a workplace that cares for their wellbeing and demonstrates support for wellbeing through a healthy work/life balance and strong diversity policies" (2017: **Mental Health in the Workplace**).

So what is a healthy workplace?



# Working with MHFA England

We are keen to work with employers who are taking a whole organisation approach to mental health, including training staff in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

Our training and consultancy is here to support you to manage wellbeing proactively and minimise the impact of mental ill health on work and life.

We'll work alongside you to deliver training that complements and enhances your existing wellbeing strategy, if you have one. If you don't, we'll get you started on that journey and guide you along the way.

We have training options to suit a range of timescales and budgets, from basic mental health awareness sessions to a full Mental Health First Aider qualification. By skilling your organisation in MHFA you can:

- Give people the tools to keep themselves and their colleagues healthy
- Encourage them to access support when it's needed, for a faster recovery
- Empower people with a long term mental health issue or disability to thrive in work
- Stop preventable health issues arising by building a supportive culture around mental health
- Embed positive, long term cultural change across your organisation through robust policy

See our range of training courses on page 28.

## Business in the Community

MHFA training is one of two key recommendations made to organisations by **Business in the Community**. Following a national survey into mental health at work, they urged employers to train as many line managers as possible in MHFA, as well as sign the Time to Change Pledge.

## Research and evaluation

Since it was first developed in Australia in 2000, MHFA has a proven international track record and has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness through evaluation.

Results of a range of studies into the effectiveness of MHFA training can be found at [mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/research-and-evaluation/](https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/research-and-evaluation/)

You can also see feedback from organisations on pages 32-33 of this document.

## Get inspired

Read on for case studies of how other organisations across a range of industries are using MHFA training. We also have a set of short film clips on supporting mental health in the workplace which you can find at [mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/videos/](https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources/videos/)



# Why train with us?



## Evidence based

Grounded in research and rigorously tested, our courses are written and developed by experts, with input from people with lived experience of mental health issues



## Global

You'll be joining a community of over two million MHFA-trained people in 24 countries around the world



## Growing

As the only company licensed to deliver MHFA courses in England, we have 1,300 qualified instructors who have trained over 210,000 people



## Trusted

Our quality assurance guarantee means you know you are getting the best in mental health training, every time



## Accredited

Our Instructor Training programme is accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health



## Community interest company

We're on a mission to end mental health stigma. Any profit we make goes back into the community



MHFA England

# MHFA courses

There are a variety of options for MHFA courses to suit your organisation. Every course is delivered by an experienced associate instructor who has attended the seven day instructor training programme accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health. Our quality assured associates have been recruited due to their diverse business backgrounds, experience in mental health, and their ability to engage and motivate attendees.



## Two Day

### Mental Health First Aiders

The delivery of this course is very flexible and it may be delivered over a number of sessions. Sessions will be a mix of presentations, discussions and group work activities.

Our instructors provide a safe learning environment and are trained to support delegates throughout the whole course.

Everyone who completes the course receives an MHFA manual to take away which is an excellent support resource. They also receive an attendance certificate from MHFA England to say that they are now a Mental Health First Aider.

### Maximum capacity

16

### Course outline

The course is delivered in four manageable chunks, each with a focus on how to apply Mental Health First Aid skills:

#### Session 1

Mental Health First Aid, mental health, and depression.

#### Session 2

Depression (cont.) and suicidal crisis.

#### Session 3

Anxiety, personality disorders, eating disorders and self-harm.

#### Session 4

Psychosis, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

### Learning outcomes

The course is designed to:

- Give a deeper understanding of the issues that impact on and relate to people's mental health
- Teach practical skills that can be used every day, including being able to spot the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and feel confident guiding people towards appropriate support
- Raise awareness and mental health literacy
- Reduce stigma around mental ill health
- Boost knowledge and confidence in dealing with mental health issues
- Encourage people to start a conversation with a person who may be experiencing a mental health issue
- Promote early intervention which enables recovery



## One Day

### MHFA Champions

Based on our MHFA Two Day course, this training has been designed specifically with the workplace in mind. As a one day course, it fits flexibly into training timetables.

The day will include a mix of presentations, group discussions and workshop activities, with our instructors providing a safe learning environment where participants are supported throughout the whole course.

At the end of the day, everyone will receive an MHFA manual which is an excellent reference and support resource.

### Maximum capacity

16

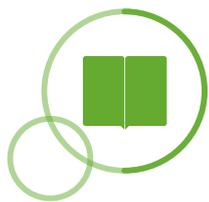
### Course outline

- About mental health
- Mental health and stress in the workplace
- Stigma and discrimination
- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Other mental health issues
- Early warning signs of mental ill health
- The MHFA action plan for mental ill health
- Recovery
- Building a mentally healthy workplace

### Learning outcomes

On this course you will learn how to:

- Recognise the main signs and symptoms of common mental health issues
- Provide initial support
- Guide a person towards appropriate professional help
- Be mindful of your own wellbeing
- Develop an understanding of how to create and maintain a healthier workforce or community



## Half Day

### MHFA Aware

MHFA Half Day is an introductory course designed to raise awareness of the issues surrounding mental health. It is not intended to replace the two day course but is a good introduction to those interested in mental health.

### Maximum capacity

25

### Learning outcomes

The course is designed to:

- Give an understanding of some of the issues surrounding mental health
- Show participants how to interact effectively with people who may be experiencing mental health issues or emotional distress
- Provide an insight into the two day course and the benefits of becoming a Mental Health First Aider

# Instructor Training



## Instructors

Although many organisations are keen to have our experienced associate instructors deliver our courses, some decide to train their own staff to become MHFA instructors. Once qualified they can deliver our courses in a timeframe and method which 100 percent suits the needs of the business. Accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health, our seven day instructor training gives participants all the tools needed to deliver successful MHFA courses.

### How will I learn?

Instructor Training takes place over seven days and is usually spread out over six weeks. This allows you to become familiar with the material and reflect on your learning. You'll have access to a mentor throughout who will be happy to help if you need any guidance along the way.

### Days one–two

Experience the MHFA course as delivered by our highly experienced national trainers.

### Day three

Hear from a variety of speakers from a mental health related background. These sessions could include discussions with people who have experienced mental health issues, a carer of someone with mental ill health, or someone from a medical background. Topics will cover a range of factors contributing to mental ill health.

### Days four–five

Your chance to deliver a session on a relevant topic followed by a one to one feedback session with your mentor.

### Days six–seven

Deliver a section of an MHFA course, gain peer to peer feedback and have another one to one session with your mentor.

You will be expected to do approximately 20 hours of your own study outside of the seven days, including time spent on preparing delivery materials for days four–five and six–seven.

### Requirements

Following the training, you'll be required to co-deliver two MHFA courses within a year to become an approved instructor. Once approved, instructors can deliver courses solo, both in their own organisation and externally.

To remain an MHFA instructor, you will need to do the following each year:

- Deliver two courses, or as many as possible
- Ensure everyone who attends your courses receives a manual and workbook that can be purchased from MHFA England
- Renew your annual membership. The current membership fee is £69.00 as of April 2017
- Attend a continuing professional development event. MHFA England offers CPD events to expand your portfolio of courses (e.g. Youth MHFA, Higher Education MHFA, Armed Forces MHFA). Or you can attend an external event relating to mental health or training skills

### How to apply

To learn more about Instructor Training in your organisation, please contact us at [info@mhfaengland.org](mailto:info@mhfaengland.org), telephone **020 7250 8062**, or visit our website [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org).

# Prices

MHFA courses:

| Course        | Cost per person |
|---------------|-----------------|
| MHFA Two Day  |                 |
| MHFA One Day  |                 |
| MHFA Half Day |                 |

# Bookings

To learn more or book onto a course, please contact:

a qualified provider of MHFA training in your area.

If your organisation is looking to roll out in-house training on a large scale, please contact MHFA England directly on:

[info@mhfaengland.org](mailto:info@mhfaengland.org)

020 7250 8062

or visit our website [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org)

# Feedback

On these pages you will find comments from people who have been on an MHFA course in their workplace.

“Definitely a course to recommend! Should be a suggested course for all levels but particularly managers and above!”

“I really enjoyed the course. It is very worthwhile and a brilliant idea. Course content was very detailed and excellent.”

“Worthwhile course for all managers - Thank you!”

“Brilliant; life-changing! Thank you so much.”

“Excellent course that has given me a much better understanding of mental health issues and how they affect people and the workplace.”

“Everyone should take this course in some form; it is amazing. Such an insightful two days.”

“This was a fantastic course. It was really well run and the level of participation and valuing of contribution was great.”

“Please roll this out & promote it to all in the corporate world. In particular the investment banking sector or any other corporate work area.”

“Overall I thought the course was very informative and has greatly increased my knowledge in all aspects relating to mental health. I thoroughly enjoyed the two days! I can now put in to practice what I have learnt.”

“Fantastic course that was very well presented. It provides full understanding of how to support someone with a mental health issue until professional help arrives.”

“Very useful course - good to reflect not only on mental health conversations, but getting the relationship and trust right for all conversations.”

“This needs to be embedded in the company in the same way as safety. This MUST be a long term (permanent) programme in same way as Health and Safety at work/fire fighting.”

“I’ve had a colleague experience mental ill health before, and I now can better spot the signs earlier and should it happen again I can offer the most appropriate support.”

“Excellent delivery, very engaging, knowledgeable, lots of real life experience. I hope more senior leadership team take away the value of MHFA and make it mandatory across the company.”

“Thank you for inviting me to attend this course - I hope it’s rolled out across the firm.”

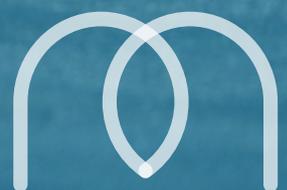


# Mental Health First Aid starts with you

For details on MHFA course bookings and delivery options, please contact:

a qualified provider of MHFA training in your area.

For large-scale bookings please contact  
MHFA England directly on:  
**[info@mhfaengland.org](mailto:info@mhfaengland.org)**  
**020 7250 8062**  
or visit our website **[mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org)**



**MHFA England**

# Case study: Channel 4

**“Mental health is vital for creativity and innovation. It helps people thrive and be the best they can be.”**

**“We are known for showcasing ground-breaking content that breaks taboos and challenges conventional thinking – and we want to make sure that our colleague training and support reflects what we broadcast to the nation.”**

## **Started MHFA training**

**July 2016**

## **Staff trained so far**

**60+**

## **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

One of Britain’s biggest broadcasters, employing 800 staff at four offices across the UK, Channel 4 is known for its commitment to diversity. Stephanie Cox, Head of HR at Channel 4 says: “Diversity is part of our remit; we are known for showcasing ground-breaking content that breaks taboos and challenges conventional thinking – and sure that our colleague training and support reflects what we broadcast to the nation.”

2016 was Channel 4’s Year of Disability, a major commitment to increasing the representation of disabled people within the broadcasting industry, timed to coincide with Channel 4’s status as official Paralympic broadcaster. Raising awareness around mental health fitted perfectly into this narrative, and Channel 4 rolled out Mental Health First Aid Training for the first time: over 60 staff completed

the two day course and became Mental Health First Aiders.

For Mental Health Awareness Week 2017, Channel 4 rolled out a more ambitious programme of events. Further Mental Health First Aid Training took place during the week itself, with additional training scheduled for later in the year too.

Attention-grabbing mental health statistics were shared via all-staff emails, intranet messages, and digital display units within the workplace. There was a series of lunchtime talks on topics such as mental health, young people and technology; mindfulness and meditation; and mental health coping strategies for adults.



**“We want to make it a conversation to discuss in a positive and preventative way and encourage people to be proud of their mental health.”**

The Mental Health First Aiders who were trained during 2016 also came together and launched an internal network, under the name 4Mind, with an intranet page and communications about the ways that they can support staff.

All of this activity was also reflected on-screen, as mental health campaigners like Ruby Wax, Stephen Fry, and Alastair Campbell took over continuity announcing duties for the week.

Claire Naik, Internal Communications Manager, says: “By understanding and influencing what different internal groups were doing, we were able to create a clear, cohesive message to the business. We brought together lots of different strands and the end result was a simple and memorable message about the importance of managing your mental health.”

## **Results**

Mental Health First Aid training has proved extremely beneficial to staff at Channel 4. Every attendee surveyed agreed both that the training has helped them understand how to support a colleague who might have mental health issues, and that the training helped them understand how to look after their own mental health.

The lunchtime sessions were also hugely powerful in raising awareness of a wide variety of mental health issues. 88% of surveyed attendees agreed that they had learnt how to spot potential signs of mental health issues, 93% agreed that they would incorporate mindfulness/meditation techniques into their work or personal routines, and 78% agreed that they had learnt more about the challenges social media and technology pose to young people’s mental health.

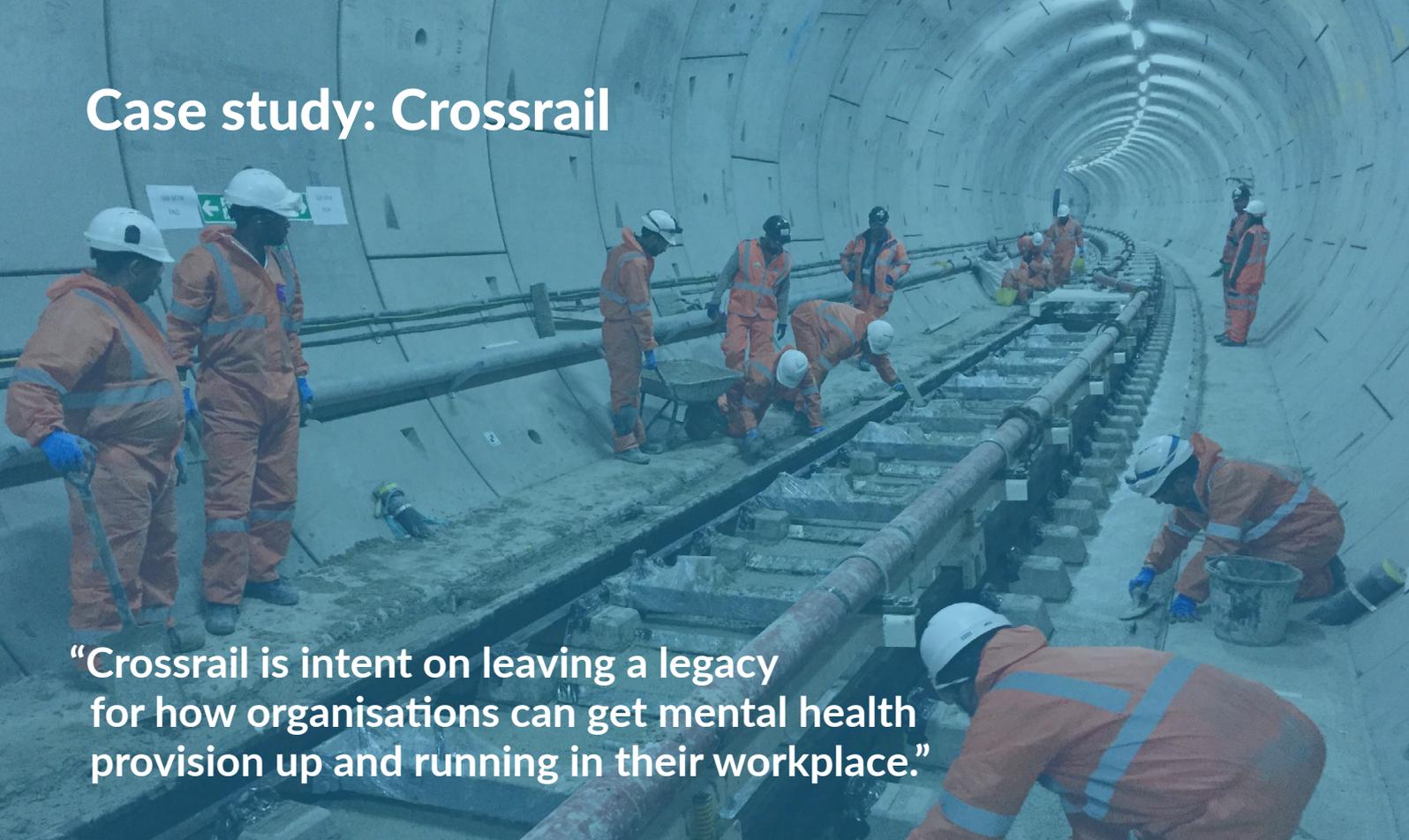
## **What the future holds**

Mental Health First Aid Training has become embedded within Channel 4’s learning and development offering. Ed Smyth, Learning and Talent Manager, says: “Mental health is vital for creativity and innovation. It helps people thrive and be the best they can be.”

There has been an increased demand for Mental Health First Aid training, particularly from line managers, whilst 4Mind, the network of internal Mental Health First Aiders, hopes to increase its internal presence and visibility.

Ed hopes that this will continue to help employees to find it easier to talk about mental health and seek support if they need it. He concludes: “The belief is always that something has gone wrong, whereas we want to make it a conversation to discuss in a positive and preventative way and encourage people to be proud of their mental health.”

# Case study: Crossrail



“Crossrail is intent on leaving a legacy for how organisations can get mental health provision up and running in their workplace.”

**“Their training gives them the skills and confidence to help colleagues while looking after their own wellbeing.”**

## Started MHFA training

October 2015

## Staff trained so far

102

Crossrail Limited is building a new railway for London and the South East. It will be known as the Elizabeth line when services commence in December 2018, and will carry over 200 million people a year between Reading and Heathrow in the west to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east via 42km of new tunnels under London.

With men three more times likely to die by suicide than their female counterparts, the case for prioritising mental health wellbeing in the currently male dominated construction industry is clear.

As the largest infrastructure project in Europe, with over 10,000 people working across over 40 construction sites, Crossrail is in an ideal position to lead by example and leave a positive legacy for the infrastructure and construction sector in the provision of mental health.

As part of the company's health and wellbeing strategy, 12 of Crossrail's staff are now trained Mental Health First Aiders, and 90 more have taken MHFA one day awareness courses.

## Why we train our staff in MHFA

Health and safety is Crossrail's number one value. As part of its 'target zero' approach emphasising that everyone has the right to go home every day unharmed, Crossrail has embedded a health and safety culture into all aspects of the project.

The decision to train staff in MHFA followed the results of a survey carried out by the project which found that like the rest of the UK population, one in four of its staff have experienced mental ill health.



**“Mental ill health can affect anyone. As an organisation we wanted to ensure that employees had people to talk to about whatever they might be going through and to give staff the skills to support people experiencing mental health issues.”**

Christina Butterworth, Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy Lead at Crossrail explains: “Mental ill health can affect anyone. As an organisation we wanted to ensure that employees had people to talk to about whatever they might be going through and to give staff the skills to support people experiencing mental health issues.”

## Results

Christina receives consistently good feedback around the mental health support offered by the business. “Many of our volunteers are team administrators as they are often the first people that colleagues approach to get a question answered or to find out where to go to get further information. Their training gives them the skills and confidence to help those colleagues while looking after their own wellbeing.”

Alongside the MHFA training, Crossrail holds a project-wide ‘Stepping Up Week’ twice a year; a period dedicated to health and safety for everyone who works on Crossrail whether that be on a construction site or in an office.

As part of Crossrail's commitment to this area of wellbeing, last October's Stepping Up Week focused on mental health.

Crossrail employs a number of other initiatives to address the stigma of mental health amongst the workforce including online training, practical workshops on personal resilience, stress management, fatigue, nutrition, exercise and mindfulness. Additionally the business is engaged with various networks and campaigns to ensure good practice and shared learning, including Public Health Responsibility Deal, Time to Talk, London Health & Wellbeing Week, City Mental Health Alliance and Business in the Community. Crossrail also offers the opportunity for staff to engage on their personal and business mental health requirements, through the company-wide wellbeing survey, as well as feedback sessions on all initiatives.

Crossrail is dedicated to improving health provision in the construction industry as a whole, with all members of its supply chain contractually bound to have their own individual

wellbeing programme and wellbeing co-ordinators at every site. In addition the project has signed up to the London Healthy Workplace Charter, is a member of the Health in Construction Leadership Group, and offers employees resilience workshops.

## What the future holds

The Crossrail programme is now over 75% complete with services through central London due to open in December 2018. Crossrail Limited is intent on leaving a legacy for how organisations can get mental health provision up and running in their workplace. Lessons learnt by the Crossrail project, ranging from their Health and Wellbeing strategy to technical construction documents, will be published at [learninglegacy.crossrail.co.uk](http://learninglegacy.crossrail.co.uk).

# Case study: EY

**“We wanted mental and physical health to hold equal weight in our wellbeing programme. We decided on MHFA because it had a clinical rigour that underpinned the training that we valued.”**

**“In the same way that anyone can get a cold or flu, anyone can be affected by a mental health issue.”**

## **Started MHFA training**

**September 2014**

## **Staff trained so far**

**400**

EY is a global professional services firm which employs over 14,000 people in the UK and Ireland. Through its wellbeing programme known as ‘Health EY’ and within this its ‘Thinking Differently’ programme which focusses specifically on mental health matters, EY has placed mental health firmly on its wellbeing agenda, introducing a number of policies, initiatives and training courses to tackle this important issue.

One of the key aspects of this programme has been the roll out of MHFA throughout the organisation. Employees are being trained to act as a first point of call for staff facing mental health challenges or seeking advice. The firm has also formed a mental health buddy scheme to provide an informal support network to anyone affected by a mental health condition.

## **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

Paul Quinlan, a Senior Manager in the Employee Relations team at EY explains the firm’s decision to invest in MHFA and says, “We wanted mental and physical health to hold equal weight in our wellbeing programme. We decided on MHFA because it had a clinical rigour that underpinned the training that we valued.”

EY’s philosophy around wellbeing is based on the idea that there should be similar approaches to mental and physical health. Paul explains, “In the same way that anyone can get a cold or flu, anyone can be affected by a mental health issue. In addition the common assumption is that most physical health problems are temporary and it’s generally expected the person will make a full recovery, whereas with mental health issues the perception tends to be the opposite.”

**“We want caring for your own mental health and that of the people around you to become business as usual at EY.”**

## Results

After attending a two day MHFA course, EY staff are able to provide help on a first aid basis and effectively guide a person who is experiencing a mental health issue towards the right support services. In the case of EY, this might be signposting the person to the Psychological Care Pathway or suggesting a referral to the firm's Occupational Health team. It might also just be having a friendly chat and reassuring the person that support is available.

Explaining how the firm promoted the training Paul says, “The course was offered to staff on a purely voluntary basis and we publicised it via our firm's daily news email bulletin, the wellbeing intranet pages and our Disability Network, Ability EY, which includes a Mental Health Network. The uptake for MHFA training surpassed our expectations and the spaces filled up immediately.

We now have over 400 partners and staff trained in MHFA and with more courses booked, this number will continue to increase over time.”

Importantly, the support for MHFA has also been taken hold at Board level, the attitude of which is summed up by Steve Wilkinson, EY's UK & Ireland Managing Partner for client service, and Partner Sponsor of Health EY.

Steve says, “Within our programme we have placed an increased emphasis on tackling the stigma of mental health, which is often viewed as the last workplace taboo. The introduction of Mental Health First Aiders and a buddy system will supplement our existing employee networks, providing a great way to get people talking about an issue that affects over one in four people in the UK.”

## What the future holds

EY has committed to delivering MHFA across the organisation for the foreseeable future and with such a big demand from staff for the training, it is clear there has been no need to persuade employees that mental health should be considered as important as physical health.

As Paul explains, “Our ‘Thinking Differently’ programme aims to educate and build awareness of mental health and wellness because we want caring for your own mental health and that of the people around you to become business as usual at EY.”

# Case study: Lendlease



“MHFA has proved to be the most well attended and proactive work stream group that has ever been established within Lendlease.”

**“Those working in the construction business are six times more likely to die from suicide as a result of depression than falling from a height.”**

## **Started MHFA training**

**August 2014**

## **Staff trained so far**

**200**

Lendlease is a leading international property and infrastructure group and in the UK employs 2,500 people. It is recognised externally for best practice in the area of mental health and was the only company in its sector to be included within the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) report ‘Getting Better: Workplace Health as a Business Issue’. Lendlease is one of the founding members of the City Mental Health Alliance – a coalition of organisations that have come together to improve mental health in the City of London and of which MHFA England is a founding committee member.

Lendlease has invested a significant amount of time and energy into working out how it can provide meaningful mental health support to its workforce. Leading the way at Lendlease is a newly created Mental Health Work Stream Group which has recently started to roll out MHFA. The training has been funded by the Lendlease Foundation programme which invests in its employees’ health and wellbeing through one of its focus areas: to enrich the lives of employees and their families.

## **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

Dan Labbad, the Lendlease CEO of EMEA region and Group COO, puts the issue of mental health firmly on the agenda stating, “Those working in the construction business are six times more likely to die from suicide as a result of depression than from falling from a height. As an industry, how much money do we spend on Health and Safety versus supporting employees with their mental health?”

Dan is not alone in his view that construction companies should be investing far more in protecting and supporting the mental health of their employees. The Trade Union Congress TUC states in its Time to Change manifesto that “Occupational stress should be given the same priority as injury prevention by employers”.



**“The construction industry has a stereotypically macho reputation and, perhaps as a result, mental health has not been something that people have been prepared to discuss openly, but that doesn’t mean it’s not an issue.”**

Martin Coyd, Lendlease’s Regional Head of Environment, Health & Safety (EMEA region) and Head of the Mental Health Work Stream Group puts this into context:

“Working away from home, long hours, pressing deadlines, environmental conditions and high levels of physical exertion are all factors that we have recognised could contribute to a person’s stress level and mental health. That’s why we decided to invite employees to join a Mental Health Work Stream Group.”

### **Results**

Martin says, “The reaction amongst staff to the launch of this initiative was tremendous and has proved to be the most well attended and proactive work stream group that has ever been established within Lendlease – a fact which I believe says a great deal about our employees’ desire to raise the profile of mental health within the organisation and create positive change in this area.”

A fully qualified MHFA instructor himself, Martin continues, “The introduction of MHFA into our business is an important step in the right direction, because we are not only breaking down the stigma that is so often associated with talking about mental health, but we are providing a first point of call for someone who might be experiencing a mental health issue.

“So far, out of our 2,500 employees in the UK, we have trained approximately 200 Mental Health First Aiders, 80 of which are current in the business, with further training courses arranged. We have posters up on every floor in every Lendlease office in the UK identifying who our qualified Mental Health First Aiders are and how to contact them.

### **What the future holds**

Along with the continued rollout of MHFA in their UK region, Lendlease has introduced a mandatory stress awareness course for every employee. First Assist, the company’s Employee Assistance Programme is promoted widely as a fully funded support service for those who may wish to speak to someone in a more anonymous setting. From January 2016 Lendlease now offers MHFA One Day training to all new starters to the business as part of its mandatory induction process. MHFA continues to be an integral part of Lendlease’s approach to employee wellbeing as they lead the way to normalise mental health within their company culture.

# Case study: NHS England

**“Our main resource is our people and the positive approach they take. The most important step is to get people together and talking, and we’re going to carry on using any platform we can to get the message out about mental health.”**

**“More than 80% of staff said that the support they receive from their colleagues is their most valued form of workplace support.”**

## **Started MHFA training**

**January 2014**

## **Staff trained so far**

**315**

NHS England is a non-departmental public body employing 5,200 people at 50 sites across England. The majority of these employees previously worked for primary care trusts and strategic health authorities. For any employer, with structural change comes the challenge of managing staff morale and wellbeing.

During NHS England’s first 18 months, mental health related issues such as stress, anxiety and depression were the most common reason given by staff for sickness absence and the top reason given for accessing the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). NHS England decided to take preventative action and is now leading the way when it comes to dealing with mental health as a workplace issue.

## **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

Sandra Winters, Head of Wellbeing and Corporate Responsibility for NHS England set out to address the staff wellbeing issue by introducing more support. “From the beginning there was a strong business case for this initiative,” Sandra says. “We were already seeing high levels of stress and dissatisfaction from staff as they transitioned into NHS England from the previous structure and we were anticipating further impact. At the time, we were offering the standard EAP service but no other supports were really in place.”

To test the existing culture, Sandra asked line managers: “Would you find it as easy to talk to a member of your team who has been off work with depression compared to someone who has been off work with a fractured ankle?” The feedback was that there was a distinct sense that staff didn’t feel equipped to talk about mental health as freely as physical health and so it became clear that more awareness and training was needed to give people the confidence and skills to support employees.

## “Staff reported a 99% increase in their understanding of mental health issues and a 91% increase in personal confidence.”

The internal staff satisfaction survey report also showed that more than 80% of employees said that the support they receive from their colleagues is their most valued form of workplace support. This suggested to Ms Winters that a peer support approach to mental health would likely be accepted and have the biggest impact.

“To see whether there would be interest, we sent out an email to staff explaining what Mental Health First Aid is and offering them the opportunity to apply. Over 100 staff replied with their interest on the first day.”

### Results

Two years on from launching the programme, NHS England has made sure that all staff know where to go for support. Every employee has access to a dedicated mental health intranet hub which has seen more than 11,000 visits to date. On this page staff can click on ‘Find my MHFAider’ to be given contact details of their nearest trained colleague. The scheme is publicised prominently on the main intranet site, in the weekly e-newsletter, and through organisation wide health awareness campaigns.

NHS England promotes the training as a voluntary personal development opportunity. Uptake has been consistently high, with so much interest from staff that there is now a waiting list to take the course. Each newly qualified MHFAider is invited to join a peer-to-peer support space on the intranet to discuss mental health topics, flag up concerns, and contact each other for support if they wish.

To date, more than 80 positive interventions have been shared on the network.

NHS England treats mental health as equally important to physical health, an attitude which is supported at the highest level. In keeping with this, MHFA is not treated as a stand-alone scheme but as a key component of the whole organisation’s approach to health and wellbeing. Sandra explains that the course works smoothly alongside other policies and procedures:

“We recently updated the return to work interview process so that everyone who has been off sick is asked if they have received support from an MHFAider, reminding them of the support available at work. There’s a lot of evidence to say that returning to work and keeping active can be an important part of someone’s recovery.

“Our Supporting Attendance at Work policy encourages people to measure their own health and flags up areas where they may need more support, which might include talking to an MHFAider. It also works well alongside our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy - through MHFA people gain a greater understanding of their colleagues who have mental health illnesses and disabilities.”

Sandra notes that getting involved with mental health has seemed to develop people’s self-esteem and confidence encouraging them to become engaged in other areas. A survey conducted on the MHFAiders’ intranet group found, on top of a 99% increase in understanding of mental health, a 91% increase in personal confidence.

And these opportunities for personal development have brought about a wider cultural change. “In regions where we have higher volumes of qualified MHFAiders, we’re seeing a lot more positive activity and engagement. Employees regularly take part in campaigns to promote health and wellbeing such as One You recently launched by Public Health England. A group in Liverpool have created their own network which runs mental health events throughout the year. We want to encourage other areas of the organisation to create these mini networks as it has worked so well there.”

### What the future holds

NHS England are looking to double the MHFAiders they have in house to 600 this year, and to keep doubling year on year after that. Often the best way to engage a large national organisation is through technology and NHS England is certainly leading the way with this approach. From livestreaming Mental Health First Aid speakers, to broadcasting mental health programmes on the employee TV channel, to promoting mental health quizzes on social media and engaging with staff through comment forums. The impact of the course will continue to be measured, both through quarterly feedback from all MHFAiders, and via the staff survey to gauge longer term changes in wellbeing and satisfaction rates. As Sandra puts it, “Our long term aim is for every person who works for NHS England to have the opportunity to do a Mental Health First Aid course. We will continue to take the training to them anywhere there’s local demand, whether it’s Cornwall or Durham.”



## Case study: Public Health Dorset

“Our experience has shown just half a day out of the office makes a real difference, upskilling the workforce, demystifying mental health and tackling stigma.”

**“83% of those trained said it had helped them in the workplace”**

**“73% said the training had helped in their personal lives”**

**Started MHFA training**

**June 2014**

**Staff trained so far**

**275**

Public Health Dorset is a partnership of Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Council. The service supports a diverse population of 750,000 covering rural and urban areas, some of which are among the most deprived in South West England.

### **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

Rik Hemmingfield, the public health specialist who introduced the training, says it is important to look after the mental wellbeing of employees. The current financial pressures facing society and the public sector have been difficult for everyone.

“There was a wider objective,” Rik says. “Our frontline staff were telling me that many members of the public are struggling with mental ill health. A high number of people calling local authority contact centres for varied reasons have increasing levels of stress and anxiety.

“They might ring about renting accommodation, but before long they are saying how worried and depressed they are.

“For public health, this was no surprise – we know mental health issues are not just widespread, they’re increasing. We could give general advice to our colleagues in front line services, but we needed to do more to support them.”

The team from Public Health Dorset decided to offer MHFA to all council staff, frontline and back office and evaluate outcomes. The evidence base for MHFA as a public health intervention for improving population mental health was strong. The objective was to improve employees’ understanding of mental health, help them look after their own emotional wellbeing and work more effectively with members of the public and customers experiencing mental ill health.

## “90% of staff said they were now confident to respond to a mental health issue.”

### Results

Six months on, 83% of those trained said it had helped them in the workplace. 90% said they were now confident to respond to a mental health issue and 73% said the training had helped in their personal lives. Workers' lives, at home and in the workplace, have benefited. So have those they serve, the public – and the team is in no doubt that lives have been saved.

Rik says, “Council workers encounter lots of people throughout the community and are in a good position to help. Our staff are now more confident to discuss mental health issues. Instead of thinking, ‘I can't do anything about this’ they might instead ask, ‘Are you alright? Shall I call your GP?’. Or they might escalate it to their manager for action, saying, ‘something is not right, what should we do?’”

Staff have many stories about how the training helped them help others – and prevented some serious crises. Sarah, from social care, feared for the safety of a father and his baby on a routine visit. Her MHFA training allowed her to approach this challenging, high risk situation confidently and professionally. She says:

“I was working with a dad who was struggling to cope with a newborn baby, alongside his own precarious mental health and a life-long learning disability. I was able to address how he felt and quickly explore with him what we needed to do next. Together we met his baby's immediate care needs and waited for mental health crisis care.

“He calmed in response to me taking control of the situation and wanted to get the medical help he knew he needed.”

Public Health Dorset says the MHFA training has reduced stress levels in the workplace too, with staff starting conversations about how they are feeling. John from HR intervened when a member of staff made a concerning remark, averting a potential suicide.

“I asked her if she was OK and she replied that she was feeling very low,” John explains. “I asked her directly if she was considering harming herself and she admitted she'd been stockpiling some pills at home to take an overdose. She said she'd also contemplated taking her life when she was in her car, earlier. I gave her some links to relevant NHS information, and asked her to speak to her husband and talk to her GP, who she was due to see the next day. I saw the lady with her husband two days later. They both thanked me, saying I'd helped her come out of her low mood enough to see a way forward.”

Rik describes a culture change taking place in the workplace, “We take better care of ourselves and each other. It's helped people become more self-aware, identify their own vulnerabilities and work out where their stress levels are.

“Staff know what to do when they're beginning to feel overwhelmed, whether it's to get some fresh air for 10 minutes, exercise more or spend more time with family. And we're all more supportive. We talk to our colleagues more and offer help where needed.”

### What the future holds

Public Health Dorset and the local councils are so impressed with the evaluation outcomes they hope to integrate mental health training into core skills of staff and managers.

“MHFA is well worth the time and money,” says Rik. “Our experience has shown just half a day out of the office makes a real difference, upskilling the workforce, demystifying mental health and tackling stigma. I'd recommend every local council to introduce it. The workforce needs to know they're supported with these issues.”

# Case study: Royal Mail

**“It’s crucial that all Royal Mail staff feel able to voice their concerns around mental health. To have managers professionally trained in this area is invaluable.”**

**“77% of those that took part say they have already put what they learnt into practice to help and advise staff.”**

## Started MHFA training

2015

## Staff trained so far

106

Royal Mail is one of Britain’s largest employers with over 139,000 staff at 1,800 sites across the country. Mental health is at the forefront of Royal Mail’s wellbeing agenda; the organisation deploys a company-wide health and wellbeing strategy and signed the Time to Change pledge in 2014, promising to reduce the stigma of mental health in the workplace.

Judith Grant, Group Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing at Royal Mail wanted to take this responsibility one step further. She explains:

“Having completed an MHFA course myself I realised the importance of MHFA skills and how beneficial the course would be to our managers. It’s crucial that all Royal Mail staff feel able to voice their concerns around mental health. To have managers professionally trained in this area is invaluable.”

## Why we train our staff in MHFA

Passion for tackling mental ill health starts at the top at Royal Mail, with CEO Moya Green actively working to encourage her peers at other large organisations to create their own mental health agenda. Ms Green is a member of Target Depression in the Workplace, an initiative made up of senior business and medical leaders working to tackle the effects of depression in the workplace.

As Group Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing, Ms Grant is always looking for ways to further improve the wellbeing of Royal Mail staff. Royal Mail worked closely with MHFA England

to create a bespoke one-day training course delivered by MHFA instructors. The bespoke course includes language specific to the day-to-day work at Royal Mail and features real Royal Mail case studies, all within the existing MHFA course framework.

The pilot of the MHFA training within Royal Mail took place in 2015, and 55 managers in four locations voluntarily enrolled. Royal Mail now have 106 MHFA trained managers, across sites including London, Southampton, Warrington and Belfast, and the courses are proving so popular that there are now waiting lists for training sessions.

MHFA training is now a part of Royal Mail’s Health and Wellbeing strategy. As Judith explains: “We are big proponents of parity of esteem between mental and physical health, so we made sure to include it alongside physical health in our wellbeing strategy, rather than separating it out.”



**“We are big proponents of parity of esteem between mental and physical health, so we made sure to include it alongside physical health in our wellbeing strategy.”**

## Results

The response from the MHFA-trained managers has been overwhelming, with 77% of those that took part in the pilot saying they have already put what they learnt into practice to help and advise staff. One manager explained how he was able to assist someone who was experiencing suicidal thoughts, and over half said the course has improved their understanding of mental health issues.

Judith explains: “We are really pleased with the results of the pilot. Royal Mail’s Learning and Development department has now issued funding to expand the training across Royal Mail and a year down the line we hope to further evaluate the programme to see how we can continue to improve our employee offering.”

## What the future holds

As part of its ongoing commitment to tackling mental health in the workplace, Royal Mail are focussing on stress, teaching employees how to recognise the signs in others and how to deal with it if they’re feeling stressed themselves. Next year they plan to concentrate on mindfulness, with the emphasis on equipping staff with techniques to look after their own mental health.

## Mick’s story

Mick Wood has been a postman with Royal Mail for 21 years, and is passionate about improving discussion and support of mental health in his workplace.

Mick suffers from depression and elements of PTSD due to his experiences as a soldier in the first Gulf War. “Everyone around me is aware of my mental health conditions,” he explains. “I am deliberately very open about my mental health with my colleagues, because I know talking about mental health can help to remove the stigma around it.”

Mick undertook Mental Health First Aid training in early 2016, which was arranged by the Communication Workers Union (CWU). He regularly uses the skills he learnt in his MHFA training at work, helping colleagues who may be showing signs of mental ill health. “On one occasion, I was working alongside a colleague of mine, Caroline. I’ve known her for a couple of years now, so I know when she’s having

good or bad days. I could see that on this particular day she was emotional and showing signs of distress, so I approached her and asked if she wanted to get a coffee and talk.

“At the warehouse, we have a ‘quiet room’ on the floor, which has proved really useful when someone is struggling with their mental health. Caroline and I sat down in there and I encouraged her to tell me how she was feeling using my MHFA skills around listening non-judgementally. She told me that she was feeling low and having difficulties, and after discussing it thoroughly we agreed that I would speak to her manager. Together, we arranged for her to go through a rehabilitation process.”

The rehabilitation process meant that Caroline was able to continue working on reduced hours until she felt better, and meant she avoided having to go on sick leave. “In my experience, sick leave can sometimes be detrimental for mental health issues because

you end up feeling isolated,” explains Mick. “Caroline was able to keep working but at a rate that suited her until she recovered.”

Mick’s MHFA training also helped him to be more aware of what mental ill health might look like in others. “Before I did the MHFA training, I would have found it more difficult to spot the signs of mental ill health in others,” he notes. “That might sound strange coming from someone who has depression, but in reality depression is a very insular experience and it’s hard to recognise the signs in other people. MHFA taught me what to look out for and as a result I’m much more empathetic and able to spot when someone might be struggling.”

As well as at work, Mick has found the training useful in his personal life. He adds, “The MHFA training also made me realise that I need to look after my own mental health more and keep an eye on how I’m feeling, as well as supporting others.”

# Case study: Skanska

“We want everyone who works here to feel they can truly be themselves and ask for support if they need it.”

**“We’ve made some great steps in the last few months in trying to change the culture and attitude around mental health.”**

## **Started MHFA training**

**February 2016**

## **Staff trained so far**

**96**

Skanska is one of the UK’s leading construction contractors and developers. Its people are the heart of its business, which is why it places such a strong emphasis on creating the right working culture where its 5,500 employees feel valued, able to contribute and reach their potential.

## **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

The effect of mental health issues in the construction industry is well documented with statistics showing that ten per cent of all suicides in the UK happen within the sector. In fact, workers are six times more likely to die from suicide than from a fall from height.<sup>1</sup>

Skanska is placing a greater focus on mental health and wellbeing, and in February 2016, was one of the first construction companies to sign the ‘Time to Change’ pledge – in association with mental health charities Mind and Rethink.

Skanska’s Executive Vice President, Greg Craig has been inspired to act by his personal experience of the impact mental health issues can have, and signed the pledge on behalf of Skanska. This marked the start of a campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues and to remove the stigma and discrimination attached to it.

Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing at Skanska, Tricia O’Neill, is leading the campaign. She explains: “Mental ill health isn’t something we can necessarily see but it affects one in four people in the UK, every year. That’s a significant statistic when you consider the size of our workforce.

“Since signing the pledge, we have been working hard to deliver on our commitment to not only put the right support in place, but to develop a culture of understanding to change the perception of mental health.”

<sup>1</sup> Mates in Construction

**“Mental ill health affects one in four people in the UK, every year. That’s a significant statistic when you consider the size of our workforce.”**

Underpinning its commitment, Skanska has started to train ambassadors in Mental Health First Aid. Through MHFA training, these ambassadors are taught to spot the signs of stress and anxiety and offer support and guidance towards a range of wellbeing facilities offered by Skanska.

“Through the ambassador programme we can offer a visible line of support to employees who might be suffering in silence and reduce the stigma that is attached to mental health,” explains Becky Martin, Communications Business Partner and a Mental Health Ambassador at Skanska.

Skanska also offers an employee assistance programme run by UK provider Health Assured, which offers around-the-clock support and counselling.

## Results

Since February 2016, Skanska has already trained 96 employees in MHFA, with a commitment to have trained 100 by the end of the year. Many of the ambassadors have personal experience of mental health issues. Tricia says: “My vision is to build up the mental health ambassador network to cover all sites at Skanska and ensure resources are available to everyone no matter where they work.”

As well as the ambassador programme, Skanska is involved in national mental health initiatives, including Mental Health Awareness Week and Mental Health Foundation ‘Tea and Talk’ events. It also held a Stand Up, where the whole company – across all sites – spent time discussing mental health issues.

Tricia explains: “The aim of these events is to keep up the momentum around removing discrimination attached to mental health issues – one conversation at a time – and to raise awareness of the support available at Skanska.”

## What the future holds

Skanska is planning a conference to coincide with World Mental Health Day on 10 October. Those attending will include supply chain employers, employees and contractors, with workshops planned to raise awareness around best practice to support anyone who may be experiencing an issue relating to their mental health.

Tricia concludes: “We’ve made some great steps in the last few months in trying to change the culture and attitude around mental health. We want everyone who works here to feel they can truly be themselves and ask for support if they need it.”

# Case study: Unilever



“Unilever is taking the agenda of mental wellbeing forward through a holistic approach, which can be tailored to the particular needs of employees in different parts of the organisation, enabling the organisation to drive real business benefit and impressive ROI.”

**“By listening and responding to their emotional needs we give people a much better chance of fulfilling their true potential.”**

## Started MHFA training

October 2013

## Staff trained so far

1,500

Multinational consumer goods company Unilever employs over 7,500 staff across the UK and Ireland in office, factory and research and development sites. In recent years the organisation has been awarded for its Wellbeing Strategy and specifically for its approach to mental health.

Unilever's Wellbeing Strategy focuses on four aspects of employee health: mental, emotional, physical, and purposeful wellbeing. Nikki Kirbell, Unilever's Health and Wellbeing UK and Ireland Programme Lead, explains this holistic approach: “The key areas of wellbeing are interlinked –

you cannot look after one effectively without looking after the others. Rather than targeting any one issue with the strategy, we chose to incorporate a person's entire wellbeing.” Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is now an embedded part of this strategy and one which has reaped rewards for the business and its staff.

## Why we train our staff in MHFA

Data collected on absences and occupational health referrals had highlighted to senior leaders that mental health was a leading cause of sickness absence, and was one of the top three reasons for employees claiming through the company's private medical insurance scheme. On World Mental Health Day 2013, the MHFA programme was launched in Unilever UK and Ireland.

As part of its Wellbeing Strategy, the organisation has taken a unique approach to rolling out MHFA. Used as a mandatory training tool for line managers across key sites,

Unilever commissioned MHFA Associate Instructors to deliver a bespoke half-day version of the course.

Nikki explains, “We recognise that line managers have such a complex and varied role, so we wanted to give them the best toolkit to support their teams. To date we have trained 50 percent of our key site line managers in MHFA skills and the feedback has been very positive from those who have attended a course.”

In contrast to other organisations which have chosen to mirror the physical first aid model and signpost Mental Health First Aiders to staff, Unilever has taken a different tack, aiming for supportive conversations to become an intuitive part of line managing. “For example, instead of jumping straight into performance discussions in a one-to-one, we encourage line managers to ask the employee how they are and gain a sense of their current wellbeing” says Nikki.



**“We recognise that line managers have such a complex and varied role so we wanted to give them the best toolkit to support their teams.”**

Leading by example, senior executives have shared their own personal stories, and have been behind the programme from the beginning. Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever, says: “By listening and responding to their emotional needs we give people a much better chance of fulfilling their true potential, which is good for them and good for the company.”

## Results

One of the first noticeable changes since incorporating MHFA into line management training was staff becoming more comfortable reporting mental health as a reason for sickness absence. This culture change had the added benefit of allowing the Medical and Occupational Health team to collect more accurate data and be more strategic in developing a targeted Wellbeing Strategy across the organisation’s many sites.

The pattern of absences has started to get shorter and Nikki suggests that the increased awareness of mental health amongst staff has enabled line managers to pick up potential issues much sooner. Added to this, and because of the firm’s clear and open approach to promoting health and wellbeing, employees are more efficiently accessing support. This support is facilitating swifter, more positive recoveries, and in many cases preventing a situation from becoming a serious health issue.

A widely communicated intranet hub ‘Wellbeing and U’ gives staff access to advice and resources to a variety of further support tools such as online mental health training courses as well as trained counsellors

who are available 24/7 through the Employee Assistance Programme. Employees can also be triaged to face to face support through the Unilever Personal Resilience tool, which is a questionnaire designed to give employees a “temperature check” of their resilience and mental wellbeing. The anonymised reports that are generated can also flag up patterns, helping to focus relevant aspects of the Wellbeing Strategy to priority sites.

Also driving the strategy is Unilever’s new Wellbeing Scorecard, which tracks trends in data from the Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health referrals, Private Medical Insurance usage, absence data, resource usage, health check outcomes and employee feedback. Ms Kirbell breaks the data down by site and by work environment to highlight key areas of focus. The central team collaborate with the regional sites, sharing best practice and encouraging them to take responsibility for their site wellbeing initiatives as part of a whole organisation.

The Wellbeing Strategy has also attracted praise from external sources. Patrick Watt, Corporate Director of Bupa UK, judged it “an extremely comprehensive programme which gives parity of mental health with physical health.” Patrick went on to highlight how Unilever is “taking the agenda of mental wellbeing forward through a holistic approach which can be tailored to the particular needs of employees in different parts of the organisation, enabling the organisation to drive real business benefit and impressive ROI.”

## What the future holds

Maintaining momentum around its staff engagement with the Wellbeing Strategy and effectively communicating the available support services to all employees will be one of the many challenges that Ms Kirbell meets over the coming months and years. With such a varied employee demographic and regional spread it is important that the organisation develops innovative ways to engage staff in its Wellbeing programme. For example, the fact that factory staff tend not to use PCs in their daily work presents a communications challenge around promoting access to the Wellbeing intranet hub. A solution which is currently being reviewed is a smartphone app which gives instant access to the ‘Wellbeing and U’ intranet hub.

Going forward, the key to keeping line managers educated and engaged with wellbeing will encompass a range of training and support tools, including the continued use of MHFA as an intrinsic part of the line management training package. Nikki concludes: “Our aim is to have at least 75 per cent of all line managers trained in the half-day MHFA course. We are committed to sharing what we have learnt on this journey so far of increasing mental health literacy and empowering line managers to take a holistic approach to staff wellbeing and performance.”

# Case study: Wellcome Trust

“We have found managers are keen to have the tools which enable them to start a meaningful conversation around mental health with their staff.”

## Started MHFA training

September 2015

## Staff trained so far

221

Wellcome is the world's largest medical research charity. It funds global research to drive reform and advance ideas with the aim to improve health for everyone. The charity employs 800 staff, excluding subcontractors at its office in Euston, London.

The nature of the charity's work means it takes its wellbeing initiatives seriously and is wholly committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of its staff. One way in which it is demonstrating this commitment is through training staff in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). Natasha Gordon, Project Manager in People and Places at Wellcome explains: “I attended an MHFA course in a previous role, so when I joined Wellcome, I volunteered to lead on co-ordinating the same training for staff at my new place of work. It is important that Wellcome, which has a number of external facing mental health research funding initiatives, is committed to the same ethos internally.”

## Why we train our staff in MHFA

MHFA training is part of a broader strategy for wellbeing at Wellcome, with particular focus on prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. While the commitment to MHFA comes from the top with the majority of the Senior Leadership Team having attended the courses, training opportunities are open to everyone, whatever their role. Natasha explains: “We ask those who would like training to register their interest on our intranet page. Capacity is regularly reached quickly which means we always have a waiting list.”

She continues: “All employees at Wellcome are given the opportunity to attend MHFA training sessions. We have found managers are keen to have the tools which enable them to start a meaningful conversation around mental health with their staff. Generally middle management can be more difficult to get buy-in from with this type of initiative, so their interest in learning the tools is great progress.”



**“We don’t have a cap on how many employees are trained in MHFA. So far we have matched the number of physical first aiders... many of our physical first aiders are also Mental Health First Aiders.”**

The results of conversations people have with their Mental Health First Aider colleagues are logged confidentially with details of what signposting was given. Natasha explains: “This way we can see if there are any common denominating factors like high levels of anxiety in specific teams, or employees seeking support from multiple Mental Health First Aiders which we can act on as an employer.”

## Results

After successfully piloting MHFA training in September 2015, the organisation now has 128 employees who have completed awareness training and 93 who are fully qualified Mental Health First Aiders. “We don’t have a cap on how many employees are trained in MHFA. We have matched the number of physical first aiders very soon after we launched and have continued to grow even with staff departures,” says Natasha. “Many of our physical first aiders are also Mental Health First Aiders.”

Wellcome’s commitment to rolling out MHFA training is apparent at every level of the business.

While the training is not compulsory, Wellcome strongly advises HR colleagues and business partners to take part in the training, and this extends to its subcontractors. Support staff play a role too, with Mental Health First Aiders on staff at the onsite gym which is run by an external provider. The security team employed directly by Wellcome are also trained in MHFA with at least one security guard on duty at all times.

Over the last year Wellcome’s MHFA Network have hosted a wide range of events for all staff, including hosting SANEline’s Black Dog campaign, holding Mental Health Awareness Week and Time to Talk Day, all of which have helped them to continue to reduce stigma.

“What’s felt like the biggest achievement so far,” says Natasha, “was kick started during Mental Health Awareness week in May by enabling members of staff from across the organisation to share their own personal experiences of mental ill health. In March I put a call out to the Network for anyone wishing to tell their own mental health story and several people came forward.

In May, our first speaker stood in front of a packed staff meeting to describe his experience of anxiety and depression. The surprise of such a seemingly positive, optimistic and well-known member of Wellcome having experienced poor mental health really boosted our work around stigma and understanding. Since then we have had another personal story speaker with several coming forward offering to share their own. Several written accounts have been shared on our intranet and these have been the most read articles in the intranet’s history, with colleagues from across the organisation supporting one another.”

## What the future holds

With more MHFA courses booked and a robust wellbeing strategy being drawn up, the charity’s enthusiasm for supporting employee mental health shows no sign of slowing. Wellcome is planning further awareness activities including signing the Time to Change Organisational Pledge to mark World Mental Health Day in October 2017.



## Case study: WHSmith

**“We are proud to be making a commitment to training our staff in Mental Health First Aid.”**

**“One in six employees suffer mental health issues, so it’s increasingly important that we have first aid provision for mental health too.”**

“We all need to look after each other and ourselves.” This is the mantra that is driving WHSmith, as the business seeks to deliver a comprehensive mental health wellbeing strategy that will not only raise awareness of mental health issues and address the stigma surrounding them, but also provide mental health support to its staff.

With around 14,000 employees, across more than 1,000 stores, three offices and three distribution centres, the retailer is working tirelessly to ensure all of its 1,100 line managers receive MHFA training and that it has just as many Mental Health First Aiders as it does physical health first aiders.

### **Why we train our staff in MHFA**

Alison Garbutt, Head of Strategic Projects who is spearheading this agenda, says: “We have many physical first aiders at WHSmith, who are all trained to help colleagues in the event of something like a heart attack – but what happens if a colleague is having a panic attack? One in six employees suffer mental health issues, so it’s increasingly important that we have first aid provision for mental health too.”

Following the death of a friend who took their own life almost four years ago, Alison has been keen to understand what she could have done differently, if at all, to support her friend. “At the time, I was concerned that if I spoke to my friend about how he was feeling I might have made things worse. I now know this not to be true. A meaningful conversation, asking the right questions and listening, might have helped.”

**“WHSmith is working tirelessly to ensure all of its 1,100 line managers receive MHFA training and that it has just as many Mental Health First Aiders as physical health first aiders.”**

Today, Alison is passionate about anything she can do to support the mental health of those around her and herself – not just for personal reasons, but for business reasons too. Mental health issues account for almost 70 million employee days off sick annually, the most of any health condition, costing UK employers between £70 billion and £100 billion per year<sup>1</sup>.

After months of investigating and consulting on the best approach for the company to tackle mental health, WHSmith decided on a two-pronged approach to delivering a mental health wellbeing strategy: working with Time to Change to raise awareness of mental health issues and the associated stigma among employees, and working with MHFA England to provide training on how to support mental health in the workplace.

WHSmith is now at a point where funding and plans for delivering this strategy have been approved by its board. Working closely with MHFA England, a tailored approach to delivering the training has been developed to reflect the nature of the business – where employees work across various sites, offices and stores.

Stephen Clarke, CEO of WHSmith, says: “I recently had the opportunity to meet with business leaders in Downing Street to discuss the need for a shift in attitude to people with mental health issues in the workplace. We are all very aware of how we can protect our physical health; but most of us aren’t so knowledgeable about how to look after our mental health. The workplace can be a vital driver for change in addressing this issue, which is why we are proud to be making a commitment to training our staff in MHFA.”

### What the future holds

As well as training staff to be Mental Health First Aiders, WHSmith are also having six members of staff train to become MHFA instructors, meaning that they can continue to train staff going forwards. Demand from staff for MHFA training is already exceeding WHSmith’s initial expectations, and the popularity of the training means that the company is already considering extending the training beyond the next 12 months.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, 2014: Public Mental Health Priorities: Investing in the Evidence